

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 003183

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR DAS DIBBLE AND NEA/ELA
DS FOR JOE MORTON AND FOR DSS AND DS/IP/NEA
ALSO FOR CA AND S/CT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER ASEC CASC KCRM EG
SUBJECT: EGYPT: PROBABLE TERROR ATTACKS IN CAIRO ON APRIL
30

¶11. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified, please handle accordingly. Not for Internet distribution.

The Attacks

¶12. (SBU) Two apparent terror attacks took place in Cairo on the afternoon of April 30. An explosion in downtown Cairo killed one Egyptian and injured seven, including four tourists (none American) at approximately 1530. The explosion occurred in Abdel Monaim Riyad Square, a major road intersection between the Egypt Museum and Ramses Hilton hotel. The GOE announced that the injured tourists included an Israeli couple, an Italian woman, and a Swedish doctor. All have been taken to local hospitals and are, according to the Ministry of Health, in stable condition.

¶13. (U) According to a statement from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) read on Egypt state television at 1800, Egyptian security forces earlier on April 30 arrested two individuals in connection with the April 7 bombing at the Khan al Khalili bazaar, Ashraf Sa'eed Youssef and Gamal Ahmad Abdel Aal. According to the statement, the police were pursuing a third suspect, Ihab Idris, when Idris threw himself from the Six October bridge (which passes over the square) causing a bomb he was carrying to detonate, killing Idris and injuring others as noted above.

¶14. (SBU) State Security officials have confirmed, although no details have been released publicly, that one hour later, at 1630, a shooting occurred at As Sayed Aisha Square, approximately one mile from Cairo's Citadel. According to unconfirmed reports, two veiled Egyptian women fired on a tourist bus; one was killed and the second critically injured by return gunfire from police. Three other Egyptians were injured; there are no reports of harm to tourists. The GOE statement read at 1800 did not mention this latter attack.

¶15. (U) The Sheikh of Al Azhar, Egypt's leading cleric, condemned the first attack as criminal; many Egyptians interviewed on the streets did the same and suggested the attackers were attempting to destabilize the country.

American Community

¶16. (SBU) All official Americans have been accounted for; many were outside Cairo for the four-day holiday weekend. The Charge will convene a full Emergency Action Committee at noon on May 1. All official Americans have been cautioned to remain on heightened alert. Embassy personnel remain in constant contact with Egyptian security officials and have requested heightened security measures at U.S. facilities.

¶17. (U) Post delivered the following notice to Americans registered at the Embassy and also posted the notice on the Embassy web site. Begin text of notice:

On the afternoon of Saturday, April 30th, at approximately 3:30, an individual set off an explosion just north of the Egyptian Museum. Four foreign tourists and three Egyptians were injured in the attack. We understand, in a second incident, that a shooting attack may have targeted a tourist bus near the Citadel later that same afternoon. The Embassy cannot confirm details on the second attack at this point. All reports indicate that no Americans were injured in either attack.

U.S. citizens are advised to avoid tourist areas in Cairo until the Embassy is able to make an assessment of the security situation in Cairo. Americans should be exceedingly careful and maintain a heightened awareness of their surroundings. The Embassy will inform the community via warden message and Internet as we develop additional information.

As the U.S. Government develops information on any potential

security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its consular information program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. For further information, U.S. citizens may call the Embassy's American Citizen Services Unit on 797-2301 during business hours, Sunday to Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. For emergencies after business hours and on weekends, U.S. citizens can contact the Embassy Duty Officer via the Embassy switchboard on 797-3300.

The Embassy is located at 5 Latin America Street, Garden City, Cairo. General information about Egypt is available at the Embassy's website www.usembassy.egnet.net. The most recent State Department Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, and Middle East and North Africa Public Announcement contain additional security information. These documents can be found at www.travel.state.gov.

End text of notice.

Implications

18. (SBU) Comment. The MOI statement on the first attack is peculiar. It strains credulity that a terrorist being pursued by police would manage to reach one of the major intersections in the city, then throw himself from a bridge so precisely that his bomb would detonate near four tourists (including two Israelis). This may well have been a deliberate attack rather than the accidental result of a pursuit.

19. (SBU) Comment continued. The sketchy information available strongly suggests the attackers sought high-profile attacks against Western tourists. The location of the downtown attack - in the city's most trafficked intersection steps from one of Egypt's most popular tourist attractions - as well as the injuries to tourists indicates that Westerners were the target. The Citadel likewise is a standard stop for visitors to Cairo. As with the attack in the Khan al Khalili tourist bazaar earlier in April, the tourism industry and ultimately the GOE must be considered targets as well. The Egyptian tourism sector shrugged off the April 7 attack; hotels and tour operators reported few cancellations and tourists have been thick on Cairo's streets. Tourism industry representatives will watch closely reaction to the latest attacks.

Visit Embassy Cairo's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/cairo>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

CORBIN